/269 cont./

539 fat in order to stay warm. The Indians wanted the sun to come out, and so they donned their apparel, painted their bodies, and began to ask Orimoto, the great spirit. Orimoto was not an Indian but a man who lived in a stone house with some animals which he had created. The Indians went on asking until finally the light broke out; but the Indians had already grown old and the children had already grown up.

796 The data at our disposal do not permit us to place in Bakairí cosmology beings such as Tchini-numa, Keri-kamé, or Orimoto and Nakoeri. Nevertheless, we prefer to regard Nakoeri as the supreme being of the Bakairí, leaving to Tchini-numa, Keri-kamé (the sun and the moon), and Orimoto the role of culture heroes, until new work clarifies their respective functions.

182 13 433 Compelled to deal with a hostile environment, such as the savannas and forests of the headwaters of the Xingu, and lacking an adequate technology, the Bakairí, like the other Xinguano Indians, depended to a large extent on uncertain factors such as the amount of rainfall and the resulting annual increase of waters, which led to a scarcity or an abundance of food. Lacking an adequate technology, they did not store 789 their produce but lived on a subsistence economy. Their hunt- [224] ing and fishing activities were followed by magic rituals with [226] which they attempted to control the possibility of sudden future [241] calamities or even of illnesses. Thus agricultural activities [396] and the building of houses or canoes had to be followed by [782] propitiations. In order to utilize the vegetal or animal raw [262] materials, it was necessary to know how to control uncertain elements: How explain, for example, why one canoe splits and another does not, when both were made by the same crafts- man? How explain how the same /270/ foods sometimes ap- ● 77 peared harmless and sometimes made people ill? The system of beliefs of the Bakairí seems to us an interpretation that

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satisfies effectively the cultural exigencies. The Bakairí lived in a world dominated by iamũra and other supernatural beings. Animals and plants were nothing more than draperies which were used by these supernatural beings. The Bakairi himself was a dual being: a spirit, kagatopüri, using a draping, the physical body, animated by another, denser spirit, kati. After death kagatopüri went through the stages of kadopa, a wandering spirit, and finally iamũra. For this reason the Bakairi did not appear to be afraid of their dead; bodies were more than vestments, but the kadopa were indeed dangerous.

784 182 In order to protect themselves against the innumerable dangers presented by the constellation of supernatural beings, such as iamũra, kadopa, topiehe, karoui, iuanaguroro, and kiłaimo, the Bakairí used two methods. The first was seclusion: uanki, at the most difficult moments, such as birth, puberty, [796] death, and shamanistic initiation. Uanki was followed by the restoration of the individual /to the community/ through the 756 tadaunũto celebration. The other method was shamanism. 784 Shamanism was open to all and it must actually have consti- 182 tuted a normal stage in the life evolution of the Bakairí. Yet few of them managed to become sorcerers, for the trials they 756 had to undergo were not easy. Contact with the supernatural 787 was achieved by sorcerers through the use of tobacco or other 276 narcotic substances. In their trances the sorcerers came to control the iamũra and acquired the powers peculiar to these supernatural beings.

795 Finally, the post-mortem life of the Bakairí, in Nakoeri's large aldea, reflects as might be expected the organization of their aldeas. Once changed into iamũra, the Bakairí join their ancestors and old friends; the pleasures of eating and drinking are not denied them since they also feel hunger and thirst, but they are now invulnerable to the perils of the forest. They can use the animals and plants, at their pleasure, as wrappers for their wanderings through the air, in the rivers, or on the ground.